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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8563

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: LOWER HOUSE ELECTION CAMPAIGN: PLEIKU AND KONTUM

1. IN THE TWO HIGHLAND PROVINCES OF PLEIKU AND KONTUM PEOPLE EVINCE CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN COMING LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS. LOCAL OBSERVERS KNOW MORE ABOUT THE LOWER HOUSE CANDIDATES IN THEIR PROVINCE THAN THEY DID ABOUT THE ELEVEN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES. PEOPLE ARE MORE WILLING TO DISCUSS THE CANDIDATES AND HAVE MORE DEVELOPED OPINIONS ABOUT THEM THAN THEY DID ABOUT

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PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AT A SIMILAR PERIOD BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER 3 ELECTIONS. THEIR INTEREST APPEARS IN CLEAR CONTRAST TO THE RELATIVE INDIFFEREJAE MANY OF THESE

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SAME PEOPLE SHOWED TOWARDS THE OUTCOME OF UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS, ALTHOUGH IT SHOULD BE REMEMBERED THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS ATTRACTED INTEREST AWAY FROM THE COINCIDENT UPPER HOUSE CONTEST.

2. LOCAL INTEREST EXISTS EVEN THOUGH THE GVN'S GET-OUT-THE-VOTE CAMPAIGN AS OF OCTOBER 14 IS MUCH LESS INTENSE THAN IT WAS 8 DAYS BEFORE THE SEPTEMBER 3 ELECTI2J. PRIOR TO THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, GOVERNMENT ELECTION P
PTERS WERE MORE NUMEROUS AND MORE WIDELY DISTRIBUTED THAN THE CAMPAIGN MATERIAL OF THE CANDIDATES. THE OTJPOSITE IS NOW THE CASE. IN PLEIKU, CANDIDATES POSTERS AND HANDBILLS CAN BE SEEN THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL AND IN SOME OF OVE SURROUNDING RURAL VILLAGES. ALTHOUGH KONTUMS CAMPAING POSTERS, BEING PRINTED IN SAIGON AS THERE ARE NO AOEQUATE LOCAL FACILITIES, HAD NOT YET REACHED THE PROVINCE BY OCTOBER 12, ONE CANDIDATE TOLD THE REPORTING OFFICER THAT THE POSTERS WOULD

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BE PUT UP "EVERYWHERE" AS SOON AS THEY ARRIVED.

3. AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, LOWER HOUSE CANDIDATES ARE SEEKING VOTES MORE ACTIVELY THAN THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVEXROF THE PRESIDENTIAL AND UPPER HOUSE LISTS DID. IN BOTH PROVINCES AT LEAST TWICE AS MANY PUBLIC MEETINGS HAVE BEEN SCHEDULED AS DURING THE LOCAL CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, AND IN ONLY HALF THE TIME. BEFORE SEPTEMBER 3 ELECTION IN PLEIKU, TECHNICAL PROBLEMS AND BICKERING BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVES LED TO THE CANCELLATION OF THE FIRST SEVERAL PUBLIC MEETINGS. THUS FAR THE LOWER HOUSE CAMPAIGN IS ON SCHEDULE IN BOTH KONTUM AND PLEIKU. ALMOST ALL CANDIDATES ARE APPEARING AT THESE MEETINGS, AND PUBLIC ATTENDANCE HAS BEEN GOOD ALTHOUGH NOT SPECTACULAR.

4. THE REPORTING OFFICER ATTENDED CAMPAIGN MEETINGS IN SMALL RURAL VIETNAMESE HAMLETS IN BOTH KONTUM AND

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PLEIKU. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, ALL THE CANDIDATES SAID ABOUT THE SAME THING: "I AM A POOR MAN OF THE COUNTRY-SIDE, NOT A RICH SAIGON POLITICIAN; I UNDERSTAND THE LOCAL PEOPLE AND THEIR NEEDS; WHEN I GO TO SAIGON I

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WILL NOT FORGET MY CONSTITUENTS; I WILL FRANKLY AND COURAGEOUSLY EXPLAIN YOUR NEEDS TO ZJE SAIGON AUTHORITIES; I WILL ASK THE GOVERNMENT TO DO THINGS FOR YOU." MOST CANDIDATES KEPT TO THIS TYPE OF GENERALIZED COMMENT. FEW SPEAKERS DETAILED WHAT THEY THOUGHT SHOULD BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE LOCAL SITUATION. THE THEME OF REPRESENTING THE PEOPLE BEFORE A DISTANT AND UNSYMPATHETIC CENTRAL GOVERNMENT RECURRED TIME AND AGAIN.

5. ONLY TWO OR THREE OF THE TWENTY-ODD CANDIDATES IN THE TWO PROVINCES MENTIONED ANY OF THE BROAD NATIONAL ISSUES - SUCH AS NEGOTIATIONS, THE PROSECUTION OF THE WAR, ECONOMIC STABILIZATION - WHICH THEY WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH IF ELECTED TO THE LOWER HOUSE. NONE OF THE CANDIDATES IN KONTUM OR PLEIKU HAS CHOSEN THE WHITE DOVE AS HIS CAMPAIGN SYMBOL, AND ONLY ONE CANDIDATE WAS NOTED TO HAVE BROACHED THE PEACE ISSUE IN HIS SPOKEN REMARKS. ONLY TWO CANDIDA
S, BOTH CATHOLICS, MENTIONED
THE NEED TO DEFEAT THE COMMUNISTS. THE REVOLUTIONARY

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WAS MENTIONED (IN PASSING) BY
RLY
TWO CANDIDATES, BOTH OF WHOM HAVE BEEN WORKING IN THE

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RD PROGRAM THEMSELVES.

6. IN BOTH PLEIKU AND KONTUM SPECIAL SEATS ARE RESERVED FOR SOUTHERN MONTAGNARDS. AS VOTERS FROM BOTH ETHNIC GROUPS WILL VOTE FOR MONTAGNARD AS WELL AS FOR VIETNAMESE

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REPRESENTATIVES ON ELECTION DAY. CANDIDATES MUST SEEK VOTES FROM BOTH ELEMENTS. THE CAMPAIGN SCHEDULE THUS BRINGS ALL CANDIDATES INTO BOTH VIETNAMESE AND MONTAGNARD VILLAGES. ENCOURAGINGLY, MANY CANDIDATES, BOTH VIETNAMESE AND MONTAGNARDS, ARE MENTIONING THE NEED FOR COOPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO ETHNIC GROUPS IN THEIR REMARKS AT PUBLIC MEETINGS AS WELL AS IN THEIR CAMPAIGN LITERATURE. BUNKER

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